

"What is your business here, mister? Who sent you?"

"That is precisely what I want to explain to you, my friend," I replied.

"We don't need your explanations, mister. Get out before something happens to you."

The group in front of the boiler was increasing and the noise of hammers became louder and louder.

"You, hammerers!" I shouted. "Keep quiet for a moment. People here are asking questions and can't hear what I tell them."

The noise gradually subsided. Now all the men turned toward my stand, and I felt their open hostility. An elderly worker said, "We don't want to listen to your nonsense, but since you come here alone you may speak your piece. Whatever you say, we will not strike."

"That is up to you," I answered. "I shall tell you what I came for and then you will do as you please."

When I finished, a youth jumped on a lathe not far from my boiler and shouted, "The other time they did not tell us about the strike. All they did was to curse, although we are no more Black Hundreds than those wise guys with their bolts and nuts."

I reminded the boilermakers of their threat to throw the Soviet speaker into a furnace. Some laughed, others seemed embarrassed. A man with a bushy black beard remarked that the men on the factory committee had no business telling a stranger about such silly threats. Indeed, nobody intended to do me any harm.

The meeting ended in a unanimous decision to join the strike as a demonstration of the unity of boilermakers with other workers of St. Petersburg.

On the evening of November 2, the Soviet convened to receive reports. The strike seemed to be a complete success.

On November 3, the Soviet met again, this time in the gilded hall of the Free Economic Society. All the reports told of the high spirit among the workers. The chairman read the appeal wired by Sergei Y. Witte, president of the Council of Ministers, to each striking factory:

"Brother workers! Go back to work, cease to make trouble, have pity on your wives and children, do not listen to bad advice. . . ."

At that time many people credited Witte with the reforms announced in the Manifesto. For the workers, however, he was just another minister of the hated Tsar. His appeal to "brother workers" introduced a note of hilarity into the situation. Replying to him, the Soviet began with an expression of surprise at the arrogance of the Tsar's favorite who dared to address the workers as his "brothers," although he knew well enough they were not his relatives. Witte's